



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
September 18, 2020
Video Conference**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects and visiting first MSA project.
2. Schedule a YSS field trip to see Cedar Ridge prior to beginning of implementation.
3. Organize a field trip to see the SNC and WCB projects and a field trip to revisit various planting method areas within the Rim.

MEETING GOALS:

- Hear Presentation by Malcolm North
- Consider New YSS Members
- Receive Grant and Forest Updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:

Chair Patrick Koepele opened the Zoom video meeting and asked for self-introductions.

Consideration of Membership:

Associated Loggers and Highway 108 Fire Safe Council were welcomed as new member organizations. Mr. Matt Waverly was welcomed back representing PG&E.

Presentation/Climate Change and Forest Restoration – Creating a Resilient Landscape:

Below are highlights from the presentation. Please find the full presentation at:

<https://yosemitestanislausolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Malcolm-North-YSS-talk-Sept-18-2020-reduced.pdf>

Seventeen of the twenty largest CA wildfires occurred in the last twenty years. In high intensity fires, up to 35% of the landscape experiences high severity burn versus 3-8% historically in fires. The King Fire was 55% high severity burn. Without extensive reforestation efforts, much of the high severity burn landscape will revert to shrubs for at least several decades.

One effect of climate change is drought. 2012-2016 was the most severe drought in the last 1000 years in CA. The Sierra Nevada forests lost approximately 150,000,000 trees.

The question is, given these conditions, how do you create resilient landscapes in the Sierra Nevada? Constraints are Spotted Owls, limitations on mechanical treatment and on fire use. There is a need to change pace and scale and consider instituting pyrosilviculture proposals.

Landscape resilience is reverse engineering by accentuating differences in forest conditions with topography (bottom up) to influence disturbance and developmental processes. Top down are the climatic factors. Bottom up is geology, soils, and topography. There is a need to bring the forest into alignment with the factors it can support.

To reverse engineer forest conditions, forests should be aligned with key drivers – productivity (soil moisture availability) and fire regime. Overstory conditions such as tall trees, canopy cover,

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and size and number of large snags is driven by soil moisture availability. Understory conditions such as small (ladder) tree density, shrubs, and logs is determined by fire frequency and intensity.

Species composition and structure/density of forests is aligned with water availability. If you want to create resilience, you must create a gap structure. The hypothesis is: In forests that historically had frequent-fire regimes, after treatments, “Is competition still driving vegetation composition & structure or disturbance?” Why: Ecologists have noted in grazed and frequent fire communities around the world, a “healthy” system is most resilient when it’s well below its carrying capacity and largely lacks competition. This idea of keeping frequent-fire forests well below carrying capacity has already been shown to secure stable carbon stocks and recently has been suggested for drought resilience. Tree spatial patterns should be clumpy/gappy vs. regular spacing. This helps reduce fire intensity and provides greater drought tolerance and better habitat – getting back to historical composition. The idea is 3-8 trees together and gaps around ¼ acre on average.

Constraints: The Spotted Owl Strategy suggests a need for a high level of canopy cover. Using LiDAR analysis of Spotted Owl habitat with over 1M acres of analysis it has been found where the Spotted Owl population is growing is where there is a lower amount of canopy cover. What was driving the owl habitat was not total canopy cover, but the cover in tall, greater than 157', trees. Owls avoid areas with understory cover suggesting reducing ladder fuels and stem density should not adversely impact owls. They also avoid patches of severely burned areas. There is often a consideration that owl PACs are sacred. However, to provide for owls into the future, we need to hold onto current habitat, but transition owls to sites that are best able to support tall trees. If owls leave a PAC and do not return for several years, the PAC should be pulled off the table.

Mechanical constraints: Can we thin our way to resilience? SNF level of constraint is measured at High 49.7 (85-100%), 30.2 Moderate (65-84%) and Light less than 65%. So, thinning alone will not work.

Fire suppression and human settlement have produced roadblocks. Current treatment is 7.6% of the historical rate. The annual deficit is 450,000 acres/year. At the current pace, due to maintenance, 2/3s of forests will never be treated.

Some deductions: the deficit is so large, there is no point in arguing over thinning vs. burning. Silviculture and fire need to come out of their silos and explicitly work together to increase pace and scale through pyrosilviculture. There is a need to scale up and concentrate efforts. We should use the extensive, but blunt, effects of fire to link treatments, thin stand density and for phenotypic selection (i.e., individuals with thicker bark and earlier branch abscission.) Use precision, but limited scale of thinning to affect fuel abundance and continuity. Increase thinning by using it to not only aid suppression, but strategically for 1) anchors, 2) ecosystem assets, and 3) revenue.

- a. A network of anchors across a landscape would act as control points for connecting and moderating managed fire treatments. In eastern Australia, with about 20% of landscape in strategic anchors, they reached a tipping point for widespread fire use.
- b. Ecosystem Assets-Areas where fuel and density reduction are needed but important ecosystem services mean more precise control over fire severity is needed.
- c. Revenue-forest treatments need a supporting revenue stream. In wet, productive locations infilling has produced large fire-intolerant trees whose removal can help restore

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stand density, increase water availability and their revenue can support local fire restoration.

Zoning Landscapes for different fire objectives can help. When a certain zone catches fire naturally, we need to let the fire burn in specific zones. Wildfire is by far the largest forest treatment. Post-fire we should move the focus beyond just salvaging and planting high severity burn areas and leverage restoration work of low/moderate severity areas, with thinning to harden fire resilience and Rx burning.

USFS Fire, SERAL, & SERAL Tools Updates:

The Region is working on revising some of the forest closure orders. On the Stanislaus, closures will be a little less restrictive. It is likely campfires and portable stoves will not be allowed.

Staff is going through SERAL Scoping Document comments, looking for significant issues, and developing alternatives. Herbicides, thinning intensities and adoption of Spotted Owl Strategy and Forest Plan modification are main issues. There is a parallel scenario-planning effort going on. It is the process by which YSS can help refine and prioritize treatment areas.

Progress has been made on development of the model. Mr. Peter Stine thinks a test run will happen in the next few weeks. They will look to YSS for discussion about values and value weights. They should be ready to discuss proposed alternatives in a couple of months. Significant additional funding is coming to the area to work in this landscape. They are working on modifying the MSA to put dollars towards implementation. 2,300 acres in Cedar Ridge will be one of the projects. The extra funding coming to the area is largely because of the success of the YSS collaborative work. YSS demonstrated support for the NEPA process and worked with the FS and to get grants. All of this has demonstrated YSS is serious about increasing pace and scale of treatment.

Ms. Liz Peterson said, in July, the DC office gave money to the forest and \$1.2M to the county to do surveys and flagging. The county is putting together an RFQ for a botanist firm to be on retainer for botany surveys. The county will be working on the surveys at the same time as the NEPA is developed. Cedar Ridge will be implemented through the MSA.

Miscellaneous Comments:

Senator Feinstein, and another senator, are working on a forest related bill. YSS has a practice on not weighing in on legislation. However, if individual groups wants to weigh in, YSS can send out the information.

Mr. Michael Pickard: SNC has a round of grants in forest health for a total of \$5M for the entire Sierra Nevada region. Looking at offering \$850,000 for the subregion. It is a rolling grant program, so they are looking for a proposal.

Mr. Randy Hanvelt: CalFIRE said they have no money in the budget for funding for forestry. There will be a TuCARE Summit on October 30th. It will be online live.

Mr. Elliott VanderKolk: SNC is looking at some viable biomass project applications. Funding came from HUD and two of the pillars are managed by SNC and are forest health mostly within the Rim Fire footprint and the biomass utilization fund pillar.

Mr. Dwight Follien: Groveland Trail Heads received some initial funding from Sonora Area Foundation for a new bike trail project. About 1.3 miles is open now. There are about six miles near the trail for multi-use to include mountain bike trails.

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Project Name	Status	Acres	Treatment Type	Funding Source	Total Cost	Agreement Type
FUNDED FOREST HEALTH PROJECTS						
Granite Reforestation	167 acres masticated, with contractors continuing work. Once completed, handwork crews will finish site prep, allowing for herbicide/reforestation in spring 2021.	402	Site Prep, Planting, Herbicide Spraying	CalFire	\$1,132,905	MSA
Granite Thin Phase 1 (Layout & Cruise)	Timber cruising and data validation completed. Roads analysis in progress, with the hope that sale will be advertised this year.	2,284	Project Layout, Cruise, Roads, Package	CalFire	\$119,074	MSA
Granite Thin Phase 2 (Implementation)	Will need to do a SPA Modification after Phase 1 is complete. Estimated sale issuance late summer 2020. Estimated Award Date 9/1/2020. Estimated Work Start Date 9/15/2020. Estimated Completion Date 3/1/2022.*	2,284	Commercial & Non-Commercial Mechanical Thinning	CalFire	\$2,046,478	MSA
Strawberry/Phase 2 Rx Fire Prep	Tuolumne County is in the process of contracting work to GVCC, using their field crews and grant-funded Forestry Corps. Tentatively to be completed in 2020.	1,000	Line Construction, Fuel Reduction, Machine & Hand Thinning, Machine Piling.	CalFire	\$500,000	MSA
Strawberry/Phase 2 Rx Fire	Fall 2021 burn slated, so as to minimize smoke impacts to communities.	1,000-3,788	Broadcast Burning.	STF		N/A - STF Administered
Rim Fire Reforestation Phase 3 Mt. Lewis Plantation Thinning	Participating agreement rather than a SPA due to legal factors; RFPs for mastication will hopefully be released in 2020. RFP awarded; flagging in progress.	2,000	Reforestation (ICO, 7'x14', & Founder's Stand Approach)	WCB	\$4,700,000	MSA
		123	Mastication	STF		MSA
PENDING FOREST HEALTH PROPOSALS/PROJECTS						
WCB Meadows Planning	Planning Proposal submitted to WCB for restoration and NEPA planning for four meadows in the STF. Funded!					
CCI 2020-2021	CaFIRE released a statement that due to state budget reasons, 2020-2021 CCI Forest Health funding is indefinitely delayed.					
FUNDED WILDLIFE HABITAT & WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECTS						
WCB Rim Restoration	Field work to finish this quarter, with one guzzler, some meadow restoration, and four GGO nest structures to be installed.	208	acres), Aspen Stand Restoration (33 acres), Deer Habitat Restoration (900 acres), Guzzler & Trough Installation (11), 18 GGO Nest Structures Installed, 2 Culverts Replaced	WCB	\$3,510,000	STF-TRT Collection Agreement
DFW Rim Fire Watershed Health Improvement Project	Began 10/02/2019. Flagging completed; veg monitoring to occur soon. Project Ends 03/13/2023.	3,700	Reforestation 600 ac, Rx Fire 2,000 ac (400 ac Mastication site prep), Plantation Thinning 1,100 ac	DFW	\$3,419,850	STF-TRT Collection Agreement
FUNDED CAPACITY GRANTS						
DOC Watershed Coordinator Forest Health Grant	Grant Began 08/01/2019. Grant Ends 07/31/2021.	N/A	Develop a plan and/or priorities for restoration treatments in the watershed. Secure Funding. Implement Projects.	Dept of Conservation	\$235,000	N/A
SNC Capacity Grant	Grant Began 1/6/2020. Grant Ends March 30, 2022.	N/A	Pilot Project using drone technology for assessment and planning.	SNC	\$16,283	N/A
FUNDING SUMMARY						
<i>Secured</i>						
CalFire (2018)	\$ 5,000,000			NFF Grants		
SNC (2016)	\$ 1,000,000			2013-14	\$ 15,888	
WCB Rim Habitat Restoration (2015)	\$ 3,500,000			2014-15	\$ 28,230	
WCB Rim Reforestation (2020)	\$ 4,700,000			2015-16	\$ 46,295	
DFW Habitat (2019)	\$ 3,500,000			2015-16	\$ 23,500	
NFF	\$ 223,838			2016-17	\$ 29,925	
DOC Watershed Coordinator (2019)	\$ 235,000			2017-18	\$ 30,000	
SNC Capacity	\$ 16,000			2018-19	\$ 25,000	
Total	\$ 18,174,838			2019-20	\$ 25,000	
				Total	\$223,838	
<i>Pending</i>						
NLC Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund	\$ 25,000		Capacity/High Level Planning			
Wildlife Conservation Society	up to \$200,000		Implementation			
Total	\$ 25,000					
OUTCOMES SUMMARY						
Acres Treated Under the MSA (Completed or Planned with Funding Secured)		9,891				
Acres Treated Under other Agreements (Completed or Planned with Funding Secured)		4,134				
Total Acres (Completed or Planned with Funding Secured)		14,025				

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Next YSS General Meeting:

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, November 20th.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Randy Hanvelt	Associated California Loggers	Present
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Mark Abraham	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	
Nathan Graveline	CDFW/Alternate	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	
Linda Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Catilyn Rich	CSERC/Alternate	Present
Bailey Hunter	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of MeWuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
James Maddox	Fish and Game Preservation Committee	Present
Scott Gelfand	Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp	Present
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	Present
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	
Michael Esposito	HHWP/Alternate	
Glenn Gottschall	Highway 108 Fire Safe Council	Present
Karen Caldwell	H108FSC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Jim Phelan	Mule Deer Foundation	Present
Dave Evans	Natural Resources Conservation Service	
Matthew Waverly	Pacific Gas & Electric	Present
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station	
Dennis Serpa	PUPCS/Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Pauline Turski	Pine Mountain Lake Assoc. Board of Directors	
Rees Warne	Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District	Present
Brandy Lively	SOS – CUSD/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	

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Dore Bietz	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	Present
Diana Beasley	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Jeff Kearns	Tuolumne Utilities District	Present
Ron Kopf	TUD/Alternate	
Keith Martin	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
Kevin Rice	SCTG/Alternate	Present
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
John Amodio	TRT/Alternate	Present
Byron Krempf	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jeff Kerns	Tuolumne Utility District	Present
Ron Kopf	TUD/Alternate	
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	
	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
	SNC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	South West Inter Face Team	Present
Jason Kuiken	USFS Stanislaus NF	
Beth Martinez	USFS/Alternate	
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	Present
Sarah LaPlante	USFS/Alternate	
Maria Benech	USFS/Alternate	

PARTICIPANTS

Keith Martin	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club	Present
Kevin Rice	TGSC	

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Malcolm North	USFS

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Lisa Westbrook	TUD
Ed Pattison	TUD
Robert Heim	TRT
James Hart	TRT
Liz Peterson	Tuolumne County
Elliott Vanderkolk	SNC
Sam Smith	Sierra Institute